

GEAR & GADGETS

A Problem to Address

Whether you're freelancing or on the job hunt, a childish email handle shouldn't hold you back

By CHRIS KORNELIS

FOR A CRITICAL span in the 1990s and 2000s, Norel Mancuso was dubbed Dlyte23, a nod to Deee-Lite, the one-hit-wonder band that brought us the thumpastic "Groove Is in the Heart," and helped shape an era of New York club culture. It was how Ms. Mancuso was known on email, AIM, Myspace, even in person.

Then in 2004, as a UCLA student, she attended a job fair to introduce herself to prospective employers. When impressed recruiters asked how they might get in touch with her, Ms. Mancuso felt a sudden rush of embarrassment. Under her breath, she shamefully spelled it out: Dlyte23@hotmail.com.

"That's when I kind of realized, man, I better actually get a professional email address," she said, "because Dlyte23 is not going to land me the job of my dreams."

Ms. Mancuso was one of the smart ones. A quick glance at any group email confirms what recruit-

'I realized Dlyte23 was not going to land me the job of my dreams.'

ers and hiring managers know too well: Not everyone sheds their adolescent email addresses when they enter adulthood, instead maintaining allegiance to digital monikers based on the music, videogames and contraband they once held dear.

Though rebranding yourself online can be a pain (as those who've been through the ordeal of changing their contact info know), the practice is often better for your career trajectory, said Chris Swanson, a career and college counselor at Bremerton High School in Washington state. "It's just like the idea that a handshake and eye contact makes a good impression. That's the first thing that comes across someone's desk." Even so, many Americans still use curious handles for professional exchanges, either by virtue of inertia or nostalgia or because they've never had an employer-issued handle and don't know any better—they only know Dave Matthews rules.

Whether you're advising your children on their digital identities or you're stuck with a compromising handle yourself and have realized it's time to adopt a new email address, here are five rules professionals say you should consider.

Keep It Simple

"People want to see you at your most professional," said Tiffany Bigham, a work-based learning specialist at Se-

attle's Garfield High School. "If they have you at bigbootymama95@hotmail, they're going to think a differently of you." Ms. Bigham suggests a direct approach: Use a simple combination of your name—first and last, or initials if necessary. Then step away from the keyboard.

Don't Try to Be Funny

In 1994, John Ross Bowie, now starring in the ABC sitcom "Speechless," was a temp at Scholastic's internet division. Knowing nothing about the internet, he let his office manager—"a brash young aspiring actor with a full head of hair named Rob Cord-dry"—pick out his email: hate666@aol.com. Mr. Bowie stuck with it for a little more than a year before wisely letting it go. "It was becoming clear that the internet

was here to stay," he said, and that email addresses would soon become standard on resumes. "As I was temping throughout my 20s, I really had to change it."

It's Not a Numbers Game

If all reasonable combinations of your name have been seized, add a few digits. But don't go crazy, Ms. Bigham said, or your email could look like a randomly generated spam account and be quickly dismissed.

Pick the numbers carefully. Mackenzie Moore, a recruiter for a hospitality company, said some digits can inadvertently convey false information to employers. "Let's just make up a name—KaitlinSmith1997. That tells me this person is just about 21 years old," she said. "That person could

be 50. But I'm going to assume, based on the 1997, she's 21."

Stay Off Drugs

Ms. Moore said she sees all manner of questionable email addresses, but the most common issue is inappropriate drug references—plenty of 420s. "If you want to go take psychedelics at Burning Man on the weekend, I don't care," she said. "But why would you use that email when trying to get a job?"

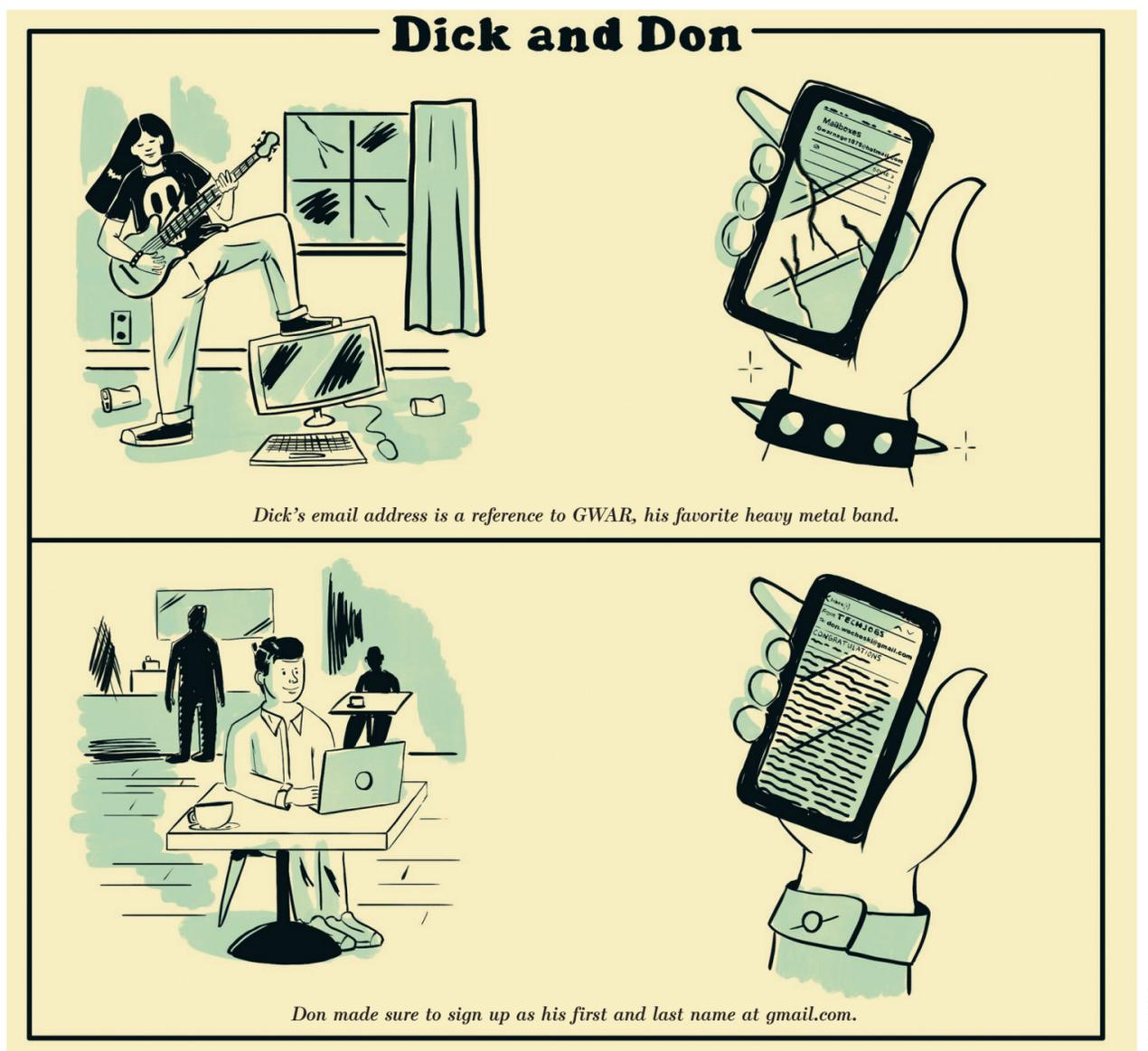
What's acceptable varies wildly by industry. When Ms. Moore was a recruiter for tech startups, she'd often refuse to consider applicants with drug-related handles. Not only do the emails reflect questionably on a candidate's judgment, but passing them along to an employer could reflect poorly on Ms. Moore, too.

Move On From AOL

It might be ironic to send missives from @aol.com, but it doesn't suggest an exceedingly tech-savvy candidate. Actually, "It weirds me out," said Ms. Moore. "Why are you still using AOL? Gmail is definitely the winner." Don't even get her started on Hotmail. When updating a résumé it's a good time to evaluate if an email address seems dated, especially if applying for a tech gig.

"I left AOL over 20 years ago, and stick to fairly professional email addresses," said Mr. Bowie.

If you're in need of a new email handle, ask someone you respect how they might respond to your potential address, said Mr. Swanson. Of course, if you're retired, emailing your golfing buddies as RadGranddad420 is just fine.



KEVIN WHIPPLE

Are Nap Breaks the New Lunch Breaks?

Resting studios offer personal sleeping pods to weary workers looking for a midday recharge. But \$15 is a lot to pay for nothingness



THE REST IS HISTORYGeorge Costanza is caught sleeping on the job in a 1993 scene from "Seinfeld."

I HAVE 200 EMAILS to answer, pointless meetings to attend, extravagant expenses to submit, but it's 2 p.m. and I'm hobbling through a productivity slump. Science says short daytime naps could improve alertness and work performance, but I can't just drop my head on my desk to catch a few ZZZZs and, unfortunately, my office is a long way off from installing napping pods à la Facebook and Google.

So instead I sneak away to a nearby "nap studio," where I can actually pay to rest my soul before going another round with my inbox. These quiet spaces tend to be outfitted in natural elements that give the senses a break from the concrete, glass and flashing screens that typically surround droopy-eyed workers. "They provide an optimized environment for sleep, from cool temperatures to total darkness to quiet," said Christopher Winter, M.D., president of Charlottesville Neurology and Sleep Medicine in Virginia and author of "The Sleep Solution." The odds are good that the shut-eye you get there, even if brief, will be high-quality.

At Nap York, a Manhattan sleep center painted in soothing shades of gray, I opt for a 30-minute "Power Nap" (guests can choose from 30-, 60-, or 90-minute sessions starting at \$15, napyork.com), an ideal length for an afternoon recharge, said Dr. Winter. Nap York's floors are soundproofed with upcycled tires, while white-noise ma-

chines emit a gentle hum. Guests who need a nudge toward oblivion can borrow noise-canceling headphones, use iPods preloaded with the meditation app Calm, and adjust reclining mattresses to prop their legs above their body, a position meant to promote blood flow.

Though it was with skepticism that I shut the curtain on my cubby-like bunk, after staring up at twinkling star lights on my pod's ceiling for a few minutes, I felt my body fade. Cut to: a buzzer under my pillow vibrating to revive me. After a 30-minute crash I really did feel refreshed and reset.

Similar resting lounges are popping up in Los Angeles, Dallas, London and Madrid. At one, Recharj in Washington, D.C., beleaguered businessfolk—many seeking slumber during peak lunch hours—can melt into ergonomic cocoons for 25 minutes with the aid of lavender-scented pillows, eye masks, 360-degree sound-dampening drapery and optional earplugs (\$9; recharj.com). Recharj also broadcasts binaural beats, sounds that aim to "lure the brain into that transitional state of consciousness of light sleep," according to founder Daniel Turissini.

"Businesses are starting to understand that sleep is at the root of all that wellness," said Mr. Turissini. "If that domino falls, they all fall." So here we are, paying \$15 per half-hour to enjoy what we once hated in preschool.

—Ashley Mateo